

## Riding on the sun's rays



Dorothea Breick

Lerab Ling 2011–2017



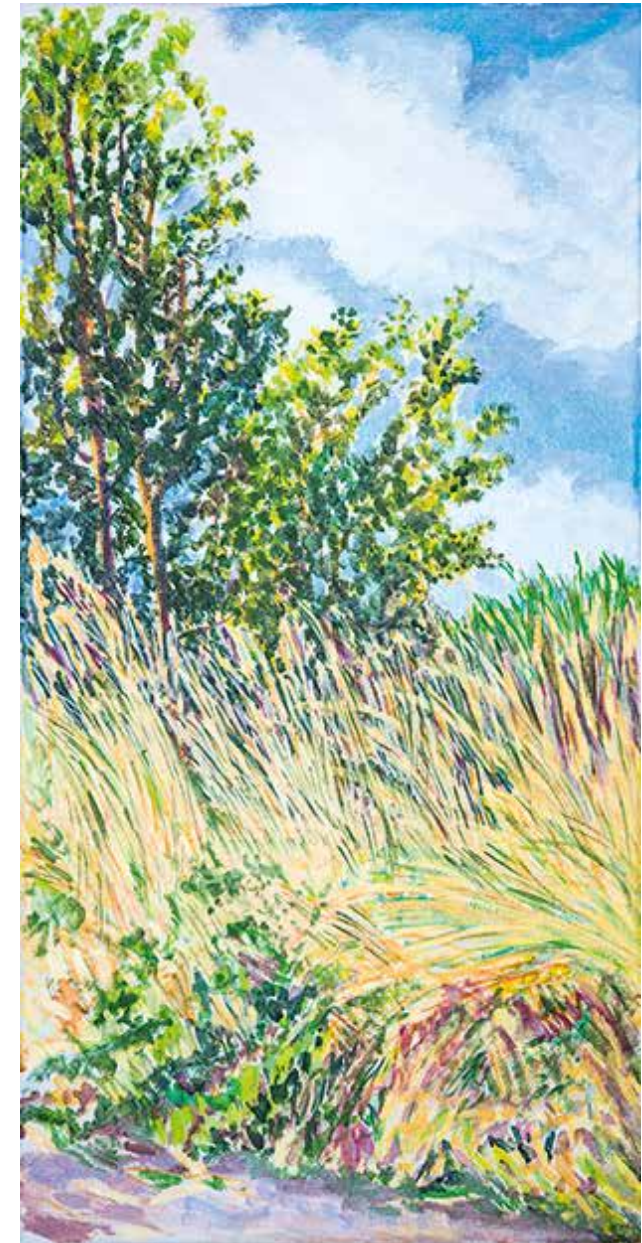
to Venerable Sogyal Rinpoche  
Khandro Tsering Chödrön  
Mayumla Pema Tsering Wangmo  
and the Rigpa sangha

Die Farbe kehrt zurück! Sehr verhalten zwar, aber das liegt am Bildlicht und es hängt mit dem Sujet zusammen, welches in dieses gehüllt ist: In ihren Malereien des Jahres 2016 widmet sich DOROTHEA BREICK der Landschaft in Südfrankreich, dort wo sie – in Lerab Ling, nahe Montpellier – einen großen Teil ihrer Zeit verbringt. Der Horizont setzt meist tief ein, die Anhöhen verlaufen sanft, die Vegetation ist betörend karg, die Landschaft im Sonnenlicht fast wie ausgebrannt. Die Sonne selbst ist nicht zu sehen, dafür ist eine leichte Bewölkung in mitten des blauen Himmels auszumachen. Die Ansicht ist überschauend, noch auf der Erde einsetzend und die Landschaft in ihrer Weite erfassend, so dass das Querformat als Panorama selbstverständlich ist. Die Formate sind ziemlich klein, in ihrer Ausrichtung wirken sie fast wie Sehschlitze. Gesteigert noch durch die völlige Abwesenheit von Menschen, vermittelt sich eine ausgesprochene Intimität. Es scheint manchmal, als sei Dorothea Breick lediglich ein paar Schritte weitergegangen oder gerade mal zur Seite getreten, um ein neues Bild zu malen. Sie lässt uns damit allein. Aber ihr Blick ist verführerisch und erzeugt einen Sog in die Tiefe, in der die Ackerfurchen parallel verlaufen und sich Bäume zu beiden Seiten eines Feldes staffeln. Dann wieder wächst seitlich oder frontal Gebüsch, dahinter öffnet sich die Natur als monumentales steigendes oder fallendes Plateau, in dem wir – winzig, unsichtbar – aufgehen. Die Teilhabe ist mit Demut verbunden.

Dorothea Breick transzendiert die Verfasstheit der Landschaft mit heiterer Leichtigkeit. Sie überträgt – *plein air* – das Ertasten mit den Augen auf die Leinwand: wie ein Nachbild auf der Netzhaut, das sie aber für die Dauer ins Positiv und damit ins Licht wendet. Konserviert ist die Aura der Landschaft. Sehen ist hier Erkenntnisprozess, sich über die Natur und ihre Bedeutung im klaren zu werden.

Himmel und Erde sind gleich gewichtig. Und doch, die Unendlichkeit trifft auf die Endlichkeit des erdverbundenen Wachstums. Dazu gibt es die etwas früher entstandenen Bilder mit dem Geäst und den Blüten im engen Ausschnitt. Die Kargheit wird zur Fülle. Im übrigen, dort, in der Landschaft, in den Bildern, hört man die Stille als Klang der brütenden Natur und spürt den Erdboden gleichmäßig pochen. Als Betrachter, die wir durch das Einsetzen der Landschaft zu unseren Füßen, die Vergitterung im Vordergrund und die zentralperspektivisch notierten Wege direkt einbezogen sind, empfinden wir ein Ausgesetzt- und Isoliert-Sein. Es sind Bilder der Ratlosigkeit im Unabgelenkten und mithin Ereignislosen der Szenarien. Und es sind Bilder der Erfüllung, der Offenbarung von Einfachheit. Schließlich geht es um mentale Fragilität, eine Vergegenwärtigung der physischen und psychischen Existenz und um Verantwortung. Es ist ein Glück, dass Dorothea Breick uns an ihrem Sehen und Erfahren teilhaben lässt mit ihren lichten, transparenten, wie schwebenden, dadurch sich verselbständigenden Farben: in gänzlich gelassener Einmaligkeit.

THOMAS HIRSCH

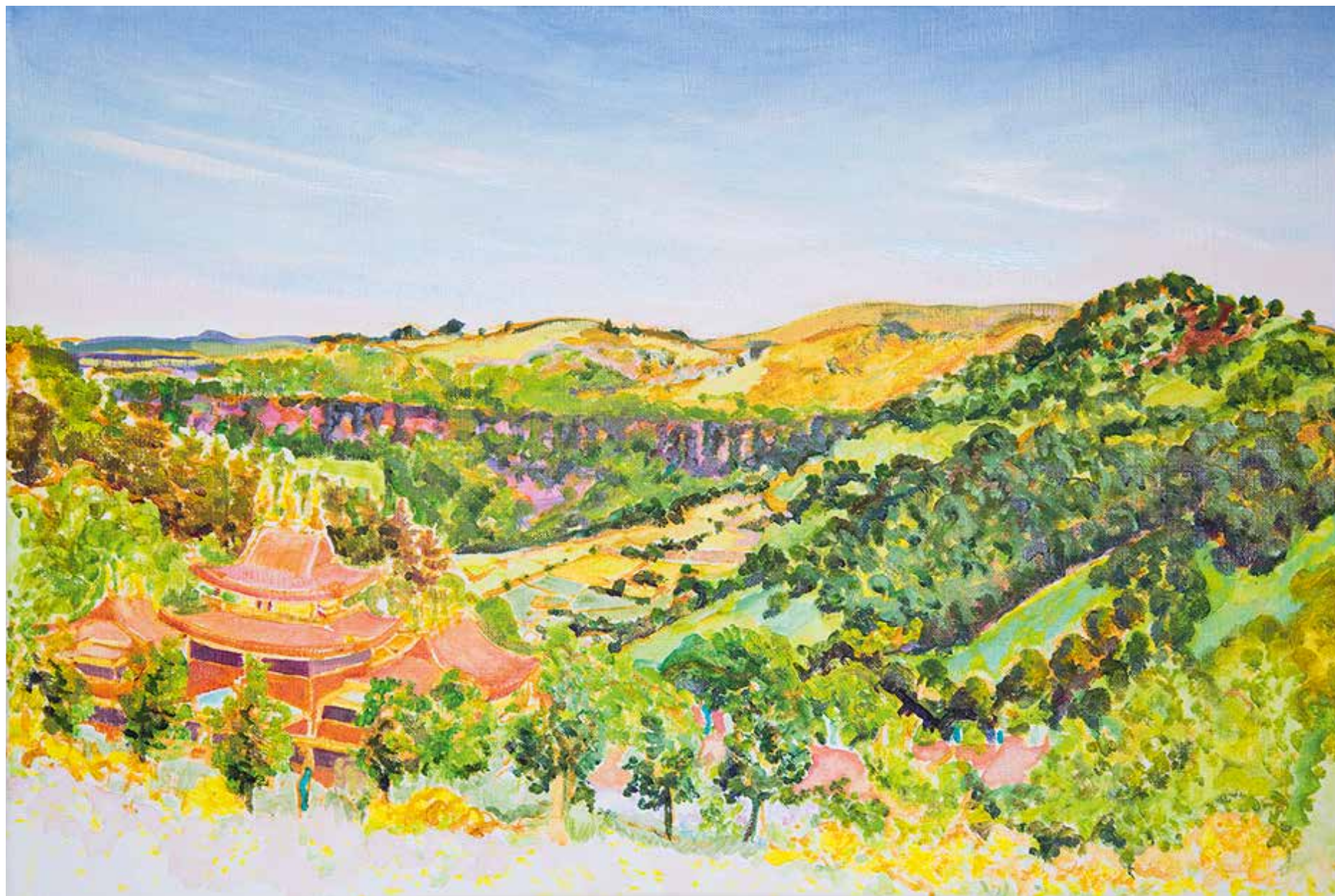


































Interview with DOROTHEA BREICK by DR. MADDER BROWN  
September 2017

MB: In 1987 you started the investigation of how illusion occurs on a tv screen. At that time you were using a video camera and started copying video stills in a photo-realistic manner in oil on canvas. You imitated this electronic way of generating images, right?

DB: Yes, I was overwhelmed by the rapid change of my field of vision and needed skilful means to record it. I also needed to slow it down or put it on hold. It was imperative to revive the experience in my studio, because my painting skills were too slow to keep up with the momentary change of what I was experiencing. It was a very frustrating time.

MB: Many painters use photography ...

DB: I did not want to use photography, as this was just a cut through reality, a too frozen version. I wanted to record the sequence of vanishing moments, the constant change of what I perceived, the flow of it.

MB: You say in a statement related to your tv paintings, that this was a way of discarding self deception, what does this mean?

DB: Well, looking back at my activity as an artist, I realize I have always been contemplating reality, trying to understand how my perception works and making this process open for others – like being aware of what and how I see and then sharing it, by expressing it. We are constantly deceiving ourselves, because we think that what we see it is. Yet painting is a process for arriving at a trans-conceptual way of perceiving, destroying the labelling. Then mere seeing can happen without judging, so it becomes a pure experience.

MB: And this paradigm has not changed since?

DB: Yes, that's right. In that sense I am so grateful to my first art teacher, Norbert Tadeusz. It was he, who really opened my eyes to the beauty within everything: a straw on the floor, a cornfield, even cables on a red carpet, and of course the naked body. For twenty-four hours a day he was merely seeing, very aware and awake, a great artist. I owe him a lot.

MB: So what would you say has changed since?

DB: In 1992 I had finished the huge garden paintings based on a series of video stills and I felt disconnected to direct experience and direct perceiving, because of always being behind a camera. It got lifeless and boring to not witness the field of vision directly. This is when I started sitting in the grass next to the highway between Düsseldorf and Cologne, making drawings and watercolours, which then became a series of landscape paintings. Later in 1991 I made a series of large water colours of a building site in Düsseldorf, Kölnerstrasse 170, and then of the Rhine Ferry.

MB: Which you then translated into huge blow ups in oil on canvas. You used the photorealistic method of your second teacher Gerhard Richter, by copying your sketches one to one.

DB: Yes, it was a trick and it worked for a while. But the exciting part was more and more the direct notation in front of the scene. The work in the studio was like a copy of the original.

MB: Was it a testimony of failure?

DB: Yes, as Dr. Raimund Stecker put it in his text in the catalogue of Kunstverein Rheinland und Westfalen 1998, '...the willingness to fail...'

MB: Though beautiful testimonies occurred, like the huge painting, 'Berg' in 1999 and 'Ali' in 2000.

DB: Yes. At the same time I was noting down inwardly seeing moments in pencil drawings. These were more related to emotional states and deep feelings like love, desire, aggression, jealousy, despair, excitement, fear...

MB: Like the Penthiselea cycle and the drawings that were exhibited for the first time 1999 in Folkwang museum, right?

DB: Yes. I could focus only for three minutes undistracted, being aware of an inner state and express that image in a rapid sketch. I had to hide the results and protect them from my judgemental mind, as I felt ashamed and never wanted to publish them. They were so personal and intimate. Only because an artist friend valued them highly and encouraged me to share them, they were seen for the first time in Paris in Galerie Nelson together with a wonderful piece by Reinhard Mucha, called 'Bochum'.

MB: They were based on theatre plays like *Penthesilea* by Heinrich von Kleist and *Woyzeck*, *Leonce and Lena* by Georg Büchner?

DB: Yes, I was reading a lot to process my feelings, mainly Greek classical drama like *Antigone*, *Phaedra*, any beautiful and deep writing, like *A Gentle Spirit* by Dostoyevski ... But then more and more I started to note down my ordinary everyday experiences, like housecleaning, social activity and other very personal stuff [laughing] – almost like a diary ...

MB: When did you start painting directly with oil on canvas in front of the object?

DB: In 1984 during my first year in the Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Düsseldorf. I painted four small garden scenes by directly observing the light and shadow of a tiny corner courtyard garden in Düsseldorf Lindemannstrasse. In 1997 I started giving painting classes in my studio, mainly to non-professionals and young people who wanted to apply for art school and needed to prepare a portfolio. Their innocence was remarkable and they picked up very quickly what I conveyed about direct seeing. A young artist called Aga made a self portrait under my guidance and it was so stunning. I realised that I asked her to do what I would love to do myself but was afraid of doing it. Then this talented young artist passed away unexpectedly. Completely untimely. That shock urged me to do it myself and I humbly started joining my students in painting directly what I see.

MB: In 2003 you were still using a prepared canvas so you could use oil colour almost like a drawing, right?

DB: Yes, that was another trick to escape the empty canvas and to overcome the urge to fill the white canvas completely with colour. It was only satisfying for a while. Some nice results occurred though [laughing].

MB: So you started your project 'Eins zu eins, eine Dialogpartnerschaft', right?

DB: Yes, I wanted to paint people, faces, human beings, not always still life. And I needed money to survive. I could not afford a model and I still was very slow and could not finish a painting in one session, so what to do? I needed to transform this limitation into an advantage. First I mainly asked friends and family to commission a painting and sit for me and pay in stages. That was the solution: back to the seventeenth century, Velazquez painting 'las Meninas' for the Spanish court. I just needed to invent the court [laughing].

MB: You were quite successful with that approach – portraits like 'Charlotte' and 'Caspar' manifested. Wonderful.

DB: Yes, I was very happy. Eventually I did what I always wanted to do. I started to paint faster and my attention span expanded to one and a half hours of not conceptualising, but mere seeing.

MB: This was when the first flower paintings emerged?

DB: Yes, mainly flowers, views from my window, and faces ... all very unpopular, ordinary objects. Hardly anyone except non-professionals worked like me. I did find out later that David Hockney used a similar approach to mine.

MB: No landscape at that stage?

DB: No. I needed the static atmosphere and constant neon lights of my studio. I still needed a few sessions to finish a painting. I was not yet ready to confront momentary change outdoors.

MB: This only happened in France then after 2011, documented in this booklet.

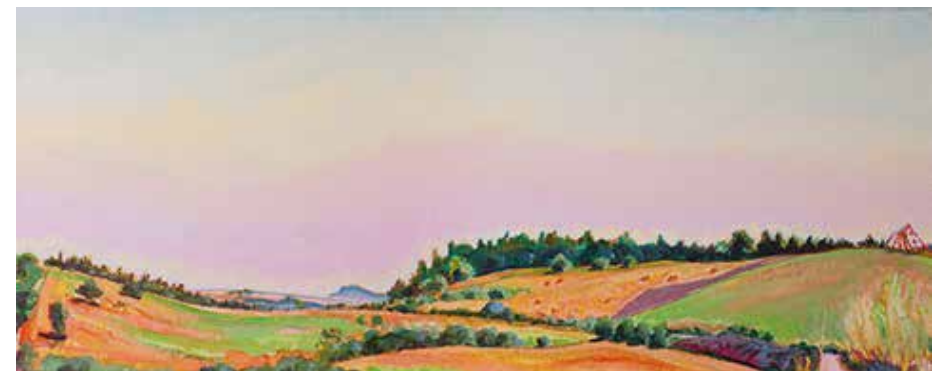
DB: Yes, during the Three Year Retreat, between 2006 and 2009 I could only use watercolour and pencil on paper. Then after 2011, I had all my tools for oil on canvas and a wheelbarrow to transport my equipment to the envisioned spot. So I sat in the fields, where I felt like the most happy being on earth – one with the elements, the vast space and impermanence ...

MB: Later you also used a car as a mobile studio?

DB: Yes, because on the Plateau du Larzac the winds are strong and things fly away the moment you have installed yourself with all your equipment. There are paintings for which I would have needed four arms: to hold the painting, the parasol, the brush and the palette.

MB: So in the car you are more protected?

DB: Yes, but what is most enjoyable is to be directly out there under the sky with the humming insects – biting you [laughing].





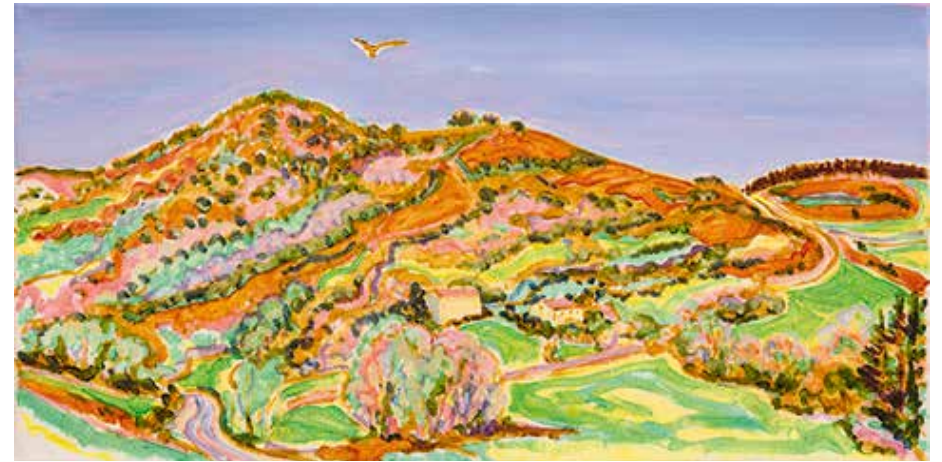




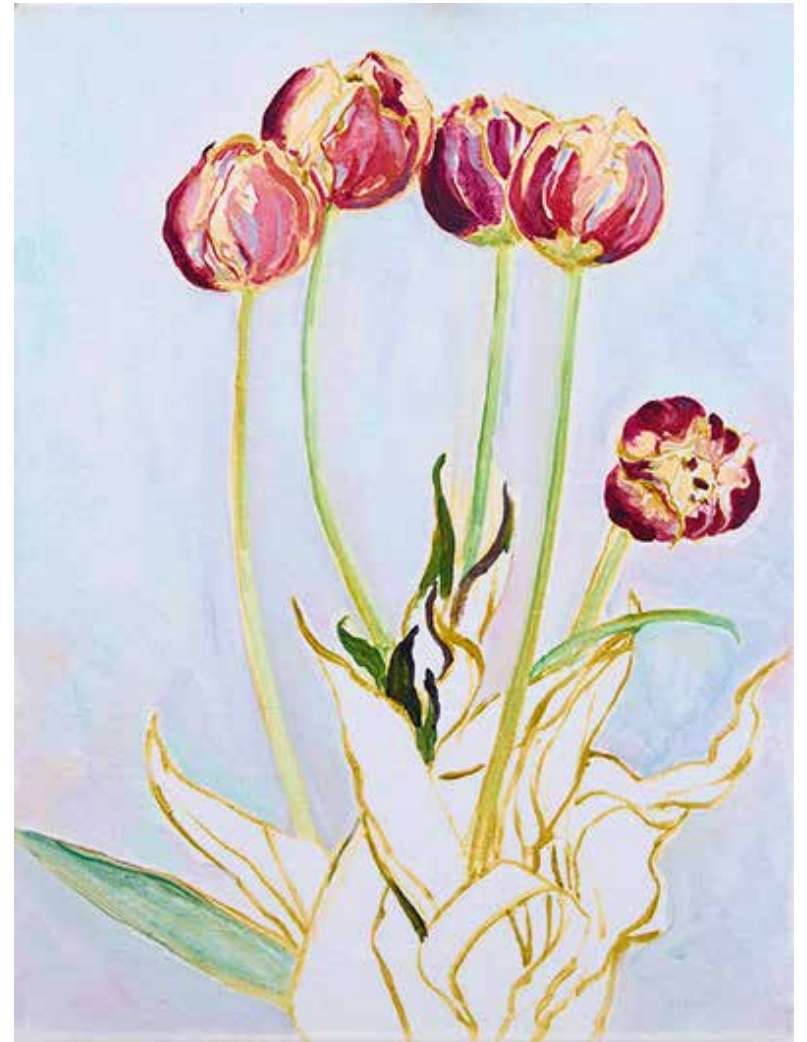








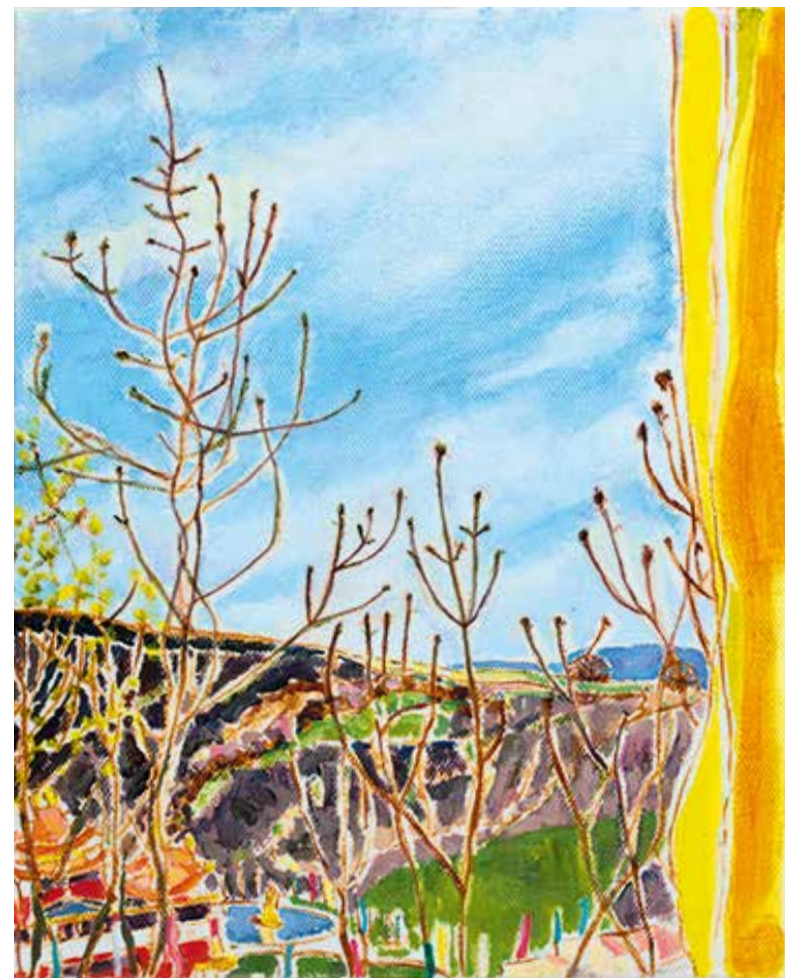


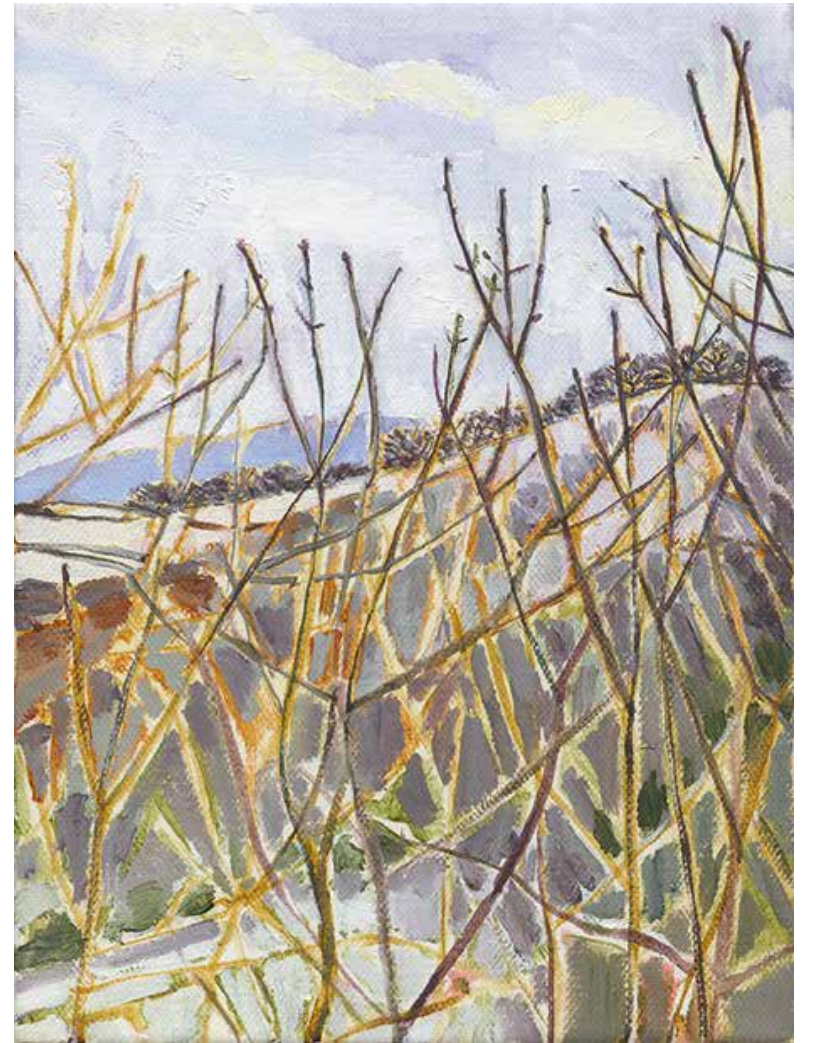




































## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

After the three-year retreat in 2010 my biggest aspiration was to continue my study and practice of the Buddhist teachings and to be part of the international spiritual community in Lerab Ling.

The uninterrupted generous support of my family and friends throughout the past seven years made this visionary path possible. They allowed me to serve my beloved master Sogyal Rinpoche, his aunt Khandro Tsering Chödrön and his mother Mayumla Pema Tsering Wangmo. Just being close to my teacher and attending these two highly realized practitioners is the greatest gift of my life. Their example of unshakable trust in the truth, their unconditional love, wakefulness and excellent conduct are the main source of inspiration for me. Being in their presence sets you free, makes you feel cosy, joyful and fully alive.

All of my paintings spring from my gratitude to Sogyal Rinpoche, Khandrola, Mayumla and all the other masters from authentic traditions, who have come to Lerab Ling to connect us with our naturally indwelling pure nature, reveal its qualities and empower us with their wisdom.

I would like to dedicate this booklet first and foremost to their long life and the fulfilment of all their aspirations. I would like to dedicate it to all my close companions on the path: the Rigpa sangha and, in the heart of it, the Lerab Ling community.

My heartfelt gratitude extends equally to my dear family and friends: Anne Breick, Nadi Breick, Pablo Maura Breick, Victor Maura Breick, Dani Maura Breick, Emilio Maura, Günther Drenker, Marion Cieplik, Emilio Gallego, Dr. Ele Niehues, Michael Selent, Birgit Harings, Dr. Franz Josef und Lydia Schmitt, Barbara Albrecht, Joachim Sieber, Anja Sieber-Albers, Dorothea Murrenhoff, Dr. Bernd Döring, Lena Mozer, Dr. Thomas Hirsch, Dr. Wolfgang Hartl, Götz Wenmakers, Gero Meller, Dr. Reinhild Ziegler, Dr. Uli Sappok, Ulla Woltering, Mares Woltering, Eva Marie Hohnholt, Dr. Jutta Hoxdeege, Gabriele Maas, Kirsten Czechor, Lena Raab, Christian Böttcher, Stefanie Preckel, Elke Hoffmann, Birgit Hoffmann, Claude und Cathi Friedrich, Simona Storelli, Edith und Rudolf Lohmeyer, Inge Angerhausen, Dorette Engi, Dr. Rainer Sabatowski, Dr. Tessa König, Rosa y Manolo Escamez Parra and Klaus Hillmann. Great thanks for editing and proof reading to Brian Corr, Jeremy Tattersall, Rebecca Abood and Tui Shrijver.

*Dorothea Breick, March 2018*

## DOROTHEA BREICK

studied painting at the Academy of Arts in Düsseldorf as a masterclass student under Norbert Tadeusz und Gerhard Richter and currently lives between Lerab Ling in southern France, Düsseldorf and Berlin.

Since 1995 she has been a student of Sogyal Rinpoche. Since 1997 she has created her paintings by deliberately avoiding the use of any photographic aids. Thus they arise as a direct impression of her field of perception, as watercolour and pencil on paper as well as oil on canvas.

It is the obvious, the mundane, which fascinates her – the view from a window, a table, a sink, a blossom, a branch.

*The painting – as a mirror, seemingly incidentally, almost randomly, sensually, vibrantly; one to one in silent dialogue with it's counterpart, before the forming of any concept – arises by itself.*

Since 2006 the source of inspiration has primarily been the rough, vast, luminescent landscape of the Plateau du Larzac in southern France. There, in the traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastery of Lerab Ling, she completed a three-year retreat under the guidance of Sogyal Rinpoche, and has since spent a large part of her time studying and practicing the Buddhist wisdom-teachings..

Born 1961

lives in southern France, Düsseldorf and Berlin

1980–1987

Studied at the Art Academy of Düsseldorf as a masterclass student of Norbert Tadeusz and Gerhard Richter

1990

Advancement Award of the City of Düsseldorf

1994–1995

Lectureship for painting at Academy of Fine Arts, Karlsruhe

1995

Student of Sogyal Rinpoche

1999

Grant from the Kunst und Kultur Foundation of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia

2000–2001

Advancement grant from Kunstfonds e.V., Bonn

2005

Lectureship at Düsseldorf Technical College

2006–2009

Participation in the three-year retreat

since 2010

Study visits at the Rigpa Centre of Lerab Ling, on the *Plateau du Larzac* in Southern France

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